

# DISTROHOPPER

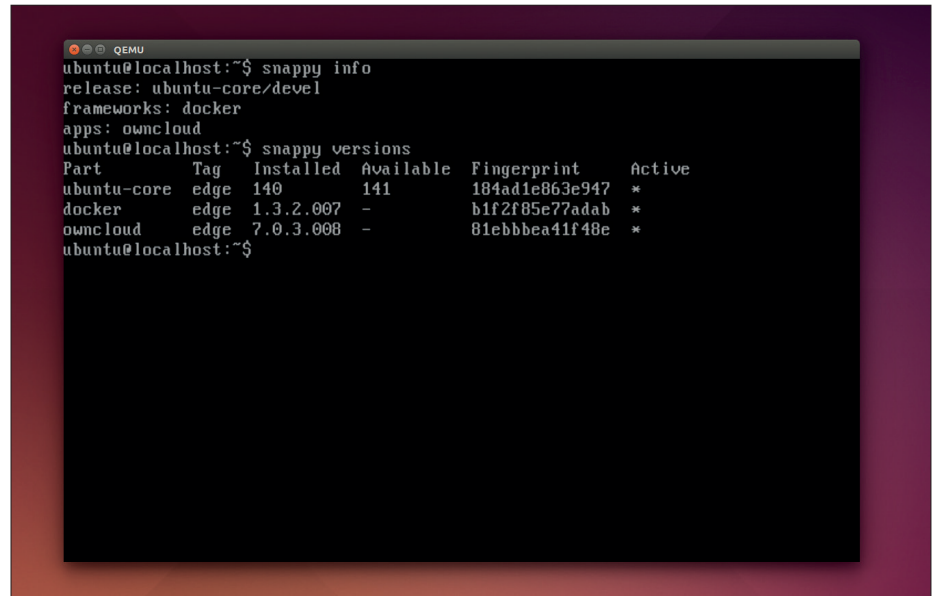
Our pick of the latest releases will whet your appetite for new Linux distributions.

## Ubuntu Core

Like Ubuntu Touch, for servers.

**U**buntu Core is mash-up of Ubuntu Server and Ubuntu Touch (the smartphone OS). Yes, we know that sounds weird, but hear us out. Underneath the touch-driven interface, Canonical has been working on the structure of Ubuntu to make it work better on phones. This means the package manager works in a different way. No longer can packages change files and settings across the system. On Ubuntu Touch, they're more self contained and controlled by AppArmor to make sure they're well behaved. The package manager is also transactional, which means that it's easier to roll packages back to previous versions, and you shouldn't have any problems if a package fails halfway through an install.

It turns out that a lot of the stuff that makes a package manager good for a phone also makes it good for a server, so Canonical has adapted the package manager from touch to make Snappy, which powers Ubuntu Core. Snappy isn't a package



```

ubuntu@localhost:~$ snappy info
release: ubuntu-core/devel
frameworks: docker
apps: owncloud
ubuntu@localhost:~$ snappy versions
Part      Tag      Installed  Available  Fingerprint  Active
ubuntu-core edge    140        141        184ad1e863e947 *
docker    edge    1.3.2.007  -          b1f2f85e77adab *
owncloud  edge    7.0.3.008  -          81ebbbea41f48e *
ubuntu@localhost:~$
  
```

For more on the logic behind Ubuntu Core and Snappy, turn to our FAQ on page 40.

manager in the usual sense of the word. It's designed to work alongside frameworks that package applications. The first of these is Docker, so through Snappy, you can install Docker, then have access to the whole range of Docker apps. Canonical has promised more Frameworks in the future, but at the

time of writing, hadn't given any details about which would be available.

Ubuntu Core makes spinning up virtual servers really easy. A production version isn't ready yet, but you can grab the alpha (maybe beta by the time you read this) from [www.ubuntu.com/cloud/tools/snappy](http://www.ubuntu.com/cloud/tools/snappy).

## Clonezilla

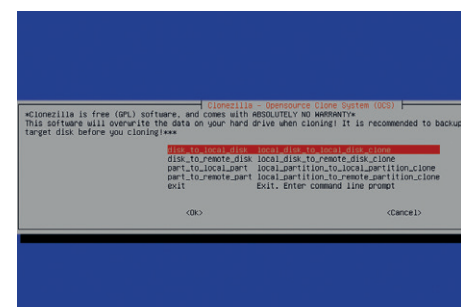
Create snapshots of hard drives with a live distro.

**D**o one thing well. That's the essence of the Unix philosophy. It's not usually applied to operating systems themselves, but in the case of Clonezilla it could be. This is a distro for making images of hard drives, and then re-imaging drives with these images (technically that's two things, but they're close enough that we count them as one). This makes it the distro of choice for IT workers who need to set up a large number of identical machines. It can also be used as a backup tool.

It's a live distro that you boot and use alongside some external storage where the

image is saved. A simple curses interface guides you through the process, so you don't need to know how to use any command line tools to use Clonezilla. There are two levels of interface, beginner mode where you just get the basic options, and expert mode where you have access to more advanced features. Together these give you enough options to perform most tasks without overwhelming new users.

Clonezilla hasn't really changed much in as long as we can remember, but the latest version brings in a range of improvements to the underlying OS from the latest Debian Sid



The curses interface means you don't have to remember any commands, but you still get you access to a wide range of options.

(on which it's built), including the 3.16 kernel, so it should support more hardware, and run a little faster. We can confidently say that Clonezilla is the best Linux distribution for re-imaging hard disks.

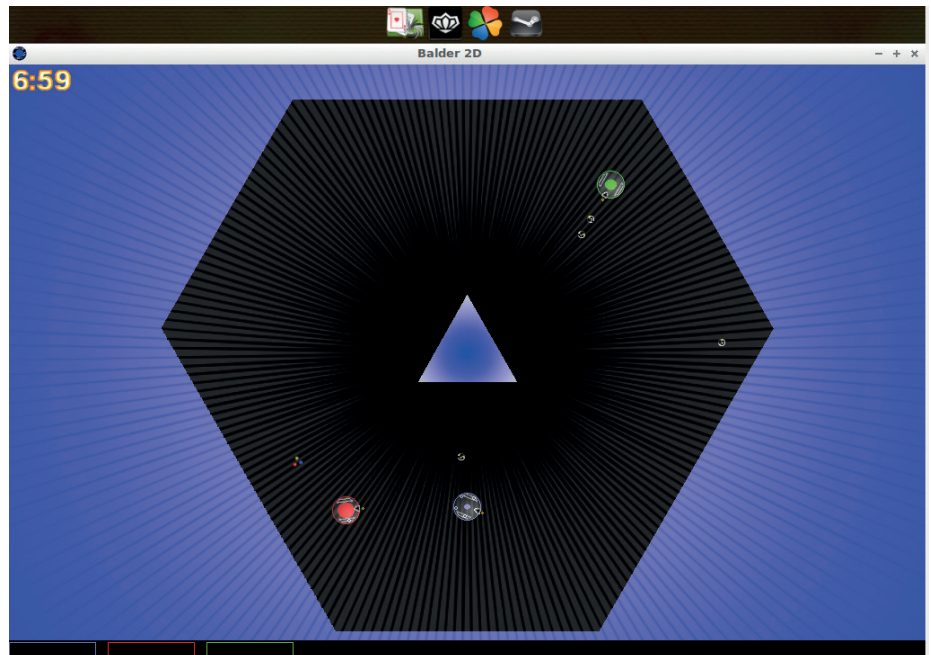
# Sparkey: GameOver

Give in and satisfy your inner gamer.

**G**ameOver is a new version of Sparkey designed for gaming. For this, it has just about every option (both closed and open source) waiting to go. There are almost 100 games on the live disc ready to be played. There are also installers for the Steam and Desura clients to give you access to games from these stores. Play on Linux is installed, which makes it easier to run Windows games, and there's a specially designed app to make it easy to install a wide range of emulators (*APTus Gamer*).

We haven't been able to work out just how many games this means there are available for this distro, but we're confident that it will be more than any one person will ever be able to play.

It's not just the variety of games that makes GameOver a good distro for playing on. GameOver also includes the Liquorix repository. This is a build of the Linux kernel that's designed to have the best performance under desktop loads, including gaming. You'll need to install the distro to get access to this as it's not used by default on the live version.



*Balder*, one of the installed games, is like a multi-player version of asteroids played in zero gravity.

Like all Sparkey releases, GameOver is built on Debian, so as well as games, there's also all the software you'd normally expect.

Right now, Sparkey Game Over is probably the quickest way to get a Linux gaming system installed.

## Fedora Core 1 The first community release from the world's biggest Linux company.

Way back in the mists of time, you could download Red Hat Linux for free. This, the company decided, was not an optimal business strategy, so Red Hat Linux became Red Hat Enterprise Linux, and was only released to customers paying a hefty fee. The community wasn't abandoned though: Red Hat created Fedora Core, a new distribution that included all the latest software that hadn't yet made it to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, and they made this new distribution available for free (as in beer as well as in speech).

Fedora core 1 (codename Yarrow) came out in 2003 on three CDs. This is a bit more than most modern distros, but back then, many computers didn't have fast internet connections, so downloading new software was a luxury rather than an expectation.

Live distros weren't yet common, so trying Fedora meant installing it (this also makes it easier to split the distro up across multiple CDs). We selected a Personal install (as opposed to Workstation or Server), so we only needed the first two discs to get a desktop. Our memory of Linux installers of this era isn't pleasant, but we found the Fedora installer quite straightforward, although it's a much more involved process than most modern installers (when did boot diskettes stop being a thing?).

Considering it took 2 CDs to install it, Yarrow seems a little short on software. Firefox hadn't yet reached version 1.0, so wasn't considered stable enough. The now-defunct *Mozilla* browser served as the default method for accessing the web. *OpenOffice.org 1.1* provided office functions, and there's a wide variety of games, but that's about it. There's plenty of other stuff in the menus, but it's mostly simple accessories. The open source ecosystem was a lot smaller back then.



12 years on, Fedora's no longer features a red fedora as the start menu.